2.1 DATA DICTIONARIES

Introduction

Data dictionaries are used in StEPS to define the item and control variables in a survey. The information provided in the data dictionaries is used in processing the survey data. There are three types of data dictionaries: Item Data Dictionary, Control Data Dictionary, and the Respondent Text Data Dictionary.

! Item Data Dictionary

The Item Data Dictionary contains descriptive, as well as processing information about each data item collected on the survey. An 'item' usually represents response data from a questionnaire, but it can also represent derived data or other data (e.g., administrative data) related to the survey. Only items requiring <u>numeric</u> responses are stored in the Item Data Dictionary. (Items requiring textual responses are stored in the Respondent Data Dictionary.)

The type of information stored in the Item dictionary describes the item being collected, including the item code associated with the item, its description, label, keycode, source, form on which the item appears, upper and lower range parameters for the item value, etc.

! Control Data Dictionary

The Control Data Dictionary contains descriptive, as well as processing information about each <u>control</u> variable on the survey. Control variables refer to the data stored in the Master Control and Stat Period Control Files (e.g., ID, alpha, name, address, city, zip, status, collection technology). The Control Data Dictionary contains information about these variables, including the name of the variable, label, description, character length, control file in which the control variable is stored, index, etc.

! Respondent Text Data Dictionary

The Respondent Text Data Dictionary is similar to the Item Data Dictionary in that it contains descriptive, as well as processing information about data items collected on the survey. The Respondent Text dictionary differs, however, in that it contains information for data items with <u>textual</u> responses, as opposed to numeric responses. Not all surveys have respondent text items, so all surveys will not have a Respondent Text Data Dictionary.

Accessing the Screen

!   Click on the SURVEY SPECIFICATIONS button from the StEPS Main Menu.

!   Click on the DATA DICTIONARIES button from the Survey Specifications Menu to display the following:

Figure 2.1   Data Dictionary Options

!   Click on the dictionary (Item, Control, Respondent Text) you wish to access. Each of these dictionaries is described in detail below.